

Mesa Water Polo

I. MESA WATER POLO PHILOSOPHY

The water polo program is organized to help youth develop important qualities that will carry into their adult life. Through consistent practice, participants will enhance their physical coordination, fitness and skill development. Gradual improvement in competition encourages stronger self-confidence and personal esteem. Participation in a team environment generates sportsmanship and team spirit. This program encourages family participation as support spectators, members of parent support groups, or volunteer officials at the competitive matches. The Mesa Parks and Recreation Division hopes to make your child's experience fun and rewarding.

II. OBJECTIVES

Each child who participates in the program shall:

- A. Be taught basic competitive water polo skills.
- B. Participate in rigorous, organized training sessions.
- C. Develop the qualities of self-discipline, sportsmanship and fitness through cooperative and regular participation in the practices and team competitions.
- D. Gain knowledge of the life-long benefits to be found in water polo and pride in accomplishment.
- E. Learn the values of team membership.

IV. ELIGIBILITY

- i. Determination of age for participation in matches shall be the player's age on **the first day of the program**. Proof of age must be made available upon the request of the League Director.
- ii. **No league player may participate in any organized competitive swim/water polo program other than those approved by the League Director any time after March 31st. If a swimmer participates in an unapproved program after March 31st, they are not eligible for participation in the Mesa City League.** Any falsification of this rule will result in suspension from summer competitive leagues. **Organized competitive swim/ water polo programs will include but is not limited to USA swimming, USA water polo, country club swimming, and YMCA's.**
- iii. Age groups for competition shall be: 10-12 and 13-15.
- iv. Participation: Every child may not compete in every match. The criteria are based on attendance, attitude, and the discretion of the coach.
- v. Because games may require continuous swimming for several minutes, it is important that team participants meet minimum proficiency requirements. If a child does not meet these minimums they will be asked to move into our lesson program until they can meet these requirements. Athletes must be able to swim continuously for 50 yards without assistance and be comfortable in deep water for water polo team membership.

V. RISKS

A parent or guardian signature is required on the registration card when registering for the swim program. The card informs the parent of the risks associated with strenuous physical exertion when participating in competitive aquatic activities and injury may result. Mesa Parks and Recreation Division employees are not liable for any injury sustained in participation in the program including transportation to and from the activities. The supervisor, participants, and parents are also held harmless. If you have any questions about this please consult the League Director.

VI. SWIM SUIT

- A. A team suit color is selected for each water polo team, but the purchase is optional. Youth are not required to wear a team suit: however, we encourage participants to wear a suit in the team colors. Any swimsuit that is functional for competitive swimming is acceptable. **(String bikinis and shorts below the knee are not considered functional)**
- B. Team participants may purchase team suits from any vendor. Vendors in Mesa East Valley Sports 6306 E. Main St. 480-832-8172 and Ski Pro located at 1924 W. 8th St. 480-962-6910, Riverview.
- C. Suits in the pool's team color will be available the first week of practice.

VIII. AWARDS AND MATCH/TOURNAMENT ORGANIZATION

- A. Awards
 - 1. League Championship Tournament Matches
 - a) Trophies will be awarded to the overall tournament winning and runner up teams
 - b) Medals will be awarded to third place teams
 - b) Ribbons will be awarded to the 4th place team
- B. Match Organization and Administration
 - 1. Water Polo matches will be played with four 6-minute quarters and a running clock. There will be 2 minutes between quarters and a 5-minute half time break. All matches will be played with an impartial referee. He or she will be in charge of the competitive matches and his or her word is final.
 - 2. There are a total of 4 teams in the league. All teams will follow the predetermined schedule and play weekly matches in a round robin format.
 - 3. It is the parent's responsibility to provide all transportation to and from all practices and matches. The City of Mesa encourages parents and friends to carpool together.
 - 4. Weekly matches will be held on Saturday mornings. A schedule is included as well as calendar that includes competitive/recreation team information.
 - 5. All matches will be scored on a win (W) loss (L) system. Points will be used in the event of a tie, to place standings for tournament entry.
- C. Disqualification Policy
 - 1. Any team not fielding at least 7 players at match start time will forfeit the match. If a team can be filled using overflow players from the opposing team, the match will still be played. The team that forfeits a match will receive a Loss (L) for that week.
 - 2. To commit an act of brutality (including, but not limited to, kicking or striking or attempting to kick or strike with malicious intent) against an opponent or official, whether during play or the intervals between periods of play. The offending player shall be excluded from the remainder of the game and the following game and shall not be substituted.

IX. BASIC RULES FOR COMPETITION

The basic format and rules of the United States Water Polo Association will be followed. To obtain a copy of the official rules please visit www.usawaterpolo.com. League rules will prevail where deemed necessary or practical

Some Basics

- Games will be 4 quarters. 6 minutes running time each quarter.
- 7 players play at a time. 6 field players and a goalkeeper.
- At the start of each quarter, teams “line-up” on their respective goal lines. On the officials whistle, the two teams sprint for the ball, which is dropped at mid-court.
- After a goal is scored, both teams must move to their respective halves of the pool. The team that was scored against receives the ball and play is started on the officials whistle.
- A goal is scored when the ball passes completely over the goal line between the goal posts and under the cross bar.
- The visiting team will wear white caps and the home team will wear caps of a contrasting color (dark). Caps are number 2-12. Goalkeepers wear red caps with the number 1 or number 13.
- Goalkeepers have special privileges. They may touch the ball with two hands (if they are inside their 5 meter area), they may use a closed fist to play the ball and they may use the bottom of the pool. Goalkeepers may not cross the mid-court line.
- All players must, before the start of the game, trim their finger and toenails, remove any jewelry and wipe off any slippery lotions.
- Teams will switch ends of the pool at halftime. If 2 officials are used, they shall switch sides after the first and third quarters.
- If the score is tied at the end of regulation play, the teams will play sudden death overtime. The first team to score will be declared the winner.
- The team with possession of the ball is on OFFENSE.
- The team that does not have possession of the ball is on DEFENSE.

PLAYER BASICS

- Referees use whistles and hand signals to signal the start of a quarter, declare goals, goal throws, corner throws and infringements of the rules. When the whistle blows, look at the official to determine what has happened. On a foul, the official will signal the direction of the attack by raising their arm in the appropriate direction. The team on offense has 3 seconds to put the ball in play once they have gained possession. Putting the ball in play consists of passing, tossing, or dropping the ball. When doing so, air must pass between the ball and the hand, even if dribbling the ball. A free throw cannot be shot unless the ball is put in play outside of 5 meters and the shot is taken without hesitation.
- After a foul is called, the defensive player can't interfere with the free throw. Interference would be: pushing the ball away from the offensive player, Obstructing the throwing motion of the offensive player or obstructing the offensive player from getting the ball. Interference with a free throw is punished with a 20 second exclusion of the offender.
- About 80% of fouls called are ordinary fouls and are punished by awarding the offended team a free throw. Ordinary fouls are minor in nature and may include: jumping off the bottom of the pool, pushing the ball underwater when tackled, touching the ball with two hands (except for the goalkeeper), to be off-sides, to impede a player who has possession but is not holding the ball or to stall.
- About 20% of fouls are major fouls. These fouls are considered more serious and are punished by either a 20 second exclusion of the offending player, a penalty shot on the goal, an exclusion of the offending player for the remainder of the game with substitution or in the most severe case, an exclusion for the remainder of the game without substitution and an additional game suspension.
 - 20 second exclusion fouls
 - Exclusion fouls may include: to interfere with a free throw, to splash in the face of an opponent or to hold, sink or pullback an opponent who is not holding the ball.
 - A player may re-enter the game when: the 20 seconds has expired, the defensive team regains control of the ball or a goal is scored.
 - Penalty shot
 - A penalty shot is awarded when a foul is committed to prevent the probable scoring of a goal inside of 5 meters.
 - Any field player may take a penalty shot.

- The player taking the shot gets the ball on the 5-meter line in front of the goal. On the officials whistle, the player must shoot the ball without hesitation.
- Game exclusion
 - Officials may exclude a player for the remainder of the game for infractions that may be dangerous or are not in the best interest of the game. These include: the use of foul language, disrespect to officials or other players or leaving the water without the permission of the official.
 - The offending team is allowed a substitute for the excluded player.
- Brutality
 - A player who attempts to strike or kick an opponent must be charged with brutality. Contact does not have to be made to result in this call.
 - The punishment is:
 - The player is excluded from the remainder of the game.
 - The offending team may not have a substitute. They must play man-down for the remainder of the game.
 - The offending player will also receive a suspension for the team's next game.
- Advantage rule
 - If, in the opinion of the official, the calling of a foul would be to the advantage of the offending team, they may decide to not call the foul.
 - This is probably one of the most important rules in water polo. Its correct implementation allows players to improve their position to either draw a major foul or to score a goal.
 - This is probably the rule that is the most confusing to the novice player or spectator.
- Like basketball, teams may play either zone or man-on-man defenses.
 - A zone means individual players are responsible to cover an area and not an individual. This defense is used against teams with a strong center and weaker perimeter shooters.
 - In man-on-man defenses players are responsible for individual players. It is usually used when the defensive team matches-up evenly with their opponent.

GLOSSARY OF WATER POLO TERMS

Advantage rule: The referee shall refrain from declaring a foul if, in their opinion, such a declaration would be an advantage of the offending player's team.

Balance: Having player evenly spaced in the offensive end. Much like basketball.

Ball under: A technical foul; to take or hold the entire ball under water when tackled.

Cage: Another word for the goal.

Center: An offensive player who runs the offensive. Usually big and strong with great leg strength and ball handling abilities. Positioned directly in front of the goal at about 2 meters this player is both a scorer and a passer.

Corner throw: A corner throw is awarded when the ball passes over the goal line, outside the goal, after being last touched by a defensive player. A free throw is taken at the 2-meter line at the side of the pool.

Counter-attack: Moving the ball from the defensive to the offensive end of the pool through swimming or passing. There are 2 possible situations. Advantage – when the offensive team outnumbers the defensive team. Transition – the movement from defense to offense when no advantage exists.

Dead time: The time from when the whistle blows for an infraction of the rules until the time when the ball is put in play. During this time the clock is stopped. Unlike other sports, water polo players use this time to work for position.

Defender: Skill player who is responsible for guarding their opponent's center. This player should be very smart, patient, big and fast. They also anchor the counter-attack.

Drawing a foul: A hard move used by an offensive player to force a defensive player to foul them. Should be done by moving laterally with a great deal of intensity. The offensive player should keep their head above water and release the ball when contact is made.

Dribbling: Swimming with the ball in front of you. The ball is controlled using the wake produced by the arms.

Drive: Offensive play in which a perimeter player swims toward the goal attempting to gain an advantage over their defender. They should then receive a pass for a possible shot at the goal.

Driver: An offensive player who plays on the perimeter. They are usually small and fast and have the ability to create scoring opportunities.

Drop: Similar to zone defense, where the players drop back to protect the middle of the pool and block shots.

Dry pass: A pass made in which the ball does not touch the water.

Eggbeater: A rotary kick used in water polo to give the athlete a great deal of stability to shoot or pass.

Flat: Describes an offensive zone located about 6 meters in front of the goal and outside the goal posts.

Free throw: The offensive team takes a free throw after an infraction of the rules, by their opponents. The free throw is taken wherever the ball is at the time of the infraction as long as it is not inside of 2 meters or where otherwise provided by the rules. The player has 3 seconds to put the ball in play once they have gained possession.

Game clock: The clock that displays the time remaining in the quarter.

Goal throw: A free throw taken by the goalkeeper if the ball goes over the goal line, outside the goal, after being touched last by an opposing player.

Hole set / Two-meter man: Another name for the center.

Hole: The area in front of the goal occupied by the center, usually located between the goal post and out to 5 meters.

Impeding: An infraction of the rules in which the offending player prevents or reduces the free movement of an opponent. This is an ordinary foul.

Man-down: A power play when the defensive team has at least one less player than the offense due to an exclusion foul.

Man-up: When the defense is man-down, the offense is man-up. At the international and collegiate levels, 70% of the total goals are scored during this time.

Neutral throw: When the referee can't determine whose ball it should be or there are simultaneous fouls a neutral throw is taken. The referee will position 2 opposing players equal distance apart. They will then toss the ball in the air above the players who will attempt to gain possession - similar to a jump ball in basketball.

Penalty shot: An infraction of the rules in which a defensive player fouls an offensive player inside of 4 meters to prevent the probable scoring of a goal. The offensive player receives a free shot, at the goal, from 4 meters, against the goalkeeper. A penalty shot is also awarded if an excluded player interferes with play.

Pick: An offensive strategy in which an offensive player uses their body to impede a defender thereby freeing a teammate for a shot. A player setting the pick must stay in motion and cannot hold the defensive player.

Point: The offensive position directly in front of the goal and outside of 5 meters. This player is usually your best driver.

Press: A defensive strategy in which each defender closely guards an offensive player; Similar to a man-to-man defense in basketball.

Red: When the shot clock is down to 5 seconds. At this time the ball needs to be shot or dumped to a corner and the offense should be shifting to defense. The team on defense should be starting their counter attack.

Shot clock: The clock that displays the time remaining before the offensive team must take a shot. The shot clock is reset on a shot attempt, on a turnover and on an exclusion.

Sprint: At the beginning of each quarter, the teams line-up on their respective goal lines. On the official's signal, both teams sprint to mid-court where the ball is dropped. The first player there gains possession of the ball for their team.

Strike zone: The area of the pool that extends 3 meters outside of the goal posts and from the 2 meter line to the 7 meter line. This is the area that is considered the best place for scoring. Defense must be very tight in the strike zone.

Wet pass: A pass that is placed on the water in front of a teammate. Usually done when the person is being closely guarded from behind.

Wing: Area of the pool located outside the goalposts and between 2 and 6 meters from the goal line.